Mr. Cory Verblen
Communications Manager
Illinois Office of Health Information Technology
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September 14, 2012

Via Electronic Transmittal

Dear Mr. Verblen,

This letter is to confirm that the PRB Foundation (dba "Peoria NEXT") proposes to submit a full application for the Illinois HIE White Space Grant Program in order to provide underserved health care entities in Illinois with efficient, easy to use access to advanced HIE services.

Peoria NEXT is a qualified 501(c)3 entity, and will organize and lead a team with deep healthcare IT experience in the HIE space to deliver the desired HIE services to the "white space" healthcare providers.

Details of the Peoria NEXT organization and the primary contact for this program are:

> PBA Foundation (dba Peoria NEXT)
> FEIN: 26-0048159
> Dr. Peter Johnsen, Scientific Director
> 801 W. Main Street
> Peoria, IL 61606
> peterbjohnsen@gmail.com

What is the scope of your proposal?

Peoria NEXT has convened a partnership of several healthcare organizations in order to deliver HIE services, including Direct-compliant communications and exchange of certified electronic health records, to at least 50 providers in urban and rural settings who are currently unable to connect effectively to such services. Importantly, a key approach of the Peoria NEXT program will be to measure the increase in utilization of the IHIE network, measure the initial benefits to the connected providers in terms of improved patient care and calculate the financial value of the connection to the ILHIE on behalf of white space entities. This effort will enable Peoria NEXT to determine proposed levels of ILHIE fees that will be sustainable in the post-pilot program environment.

In addition, the partnership will provide guidance on how the white space entities can utilize HIE services in their delivery of care including the provision of advanced, intuitive software user interfaces which will facilitate access to HIE services and simplify its implementation into provider workflows. This effort will improve patient care and health outcomes in a measurable way for white space entities involved as well as making it easier for these entities to achieve Meaningful Use under the federal government's Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Records Incentive Programs.

What licensed health care providers in which unaffiliated white space entities will you connect to HIE services?
The unaffiliated white space entities the partnership intends to focus its efforts to connect to the ILHIE are;

- Physician practices with 10 or fewer physicians;
- Community health centers
- Federally qualified health centers;
- Rural health clinics;

Significantly, the Peoria NEXT team features an ability to recruit white space entities in disparate geographic areas. The Illinois Medical District will lead the recruitment of providers and entities in the Chicago urban region, including community health centers and physician practices connected with Cook County Stroger Hospital. Peoria NEXT will recruit entities, including physician practices, Federally Qualified Health Clinics ("FQHC") and rural health centers in the Central Illinois region. This mix of white space entities will provide a powerful breadth of data as to benefits of HIE services in the diverse Illinois healthcare market.

Also, given the plan to connect entities in two separate geographic healthcare entities, the Peoria NEXT team has the ability to study interconnection opportunities between the two regions, as well as between the entities in Peoria and the Central Illinois Health Information Exchange ("CIHIE").

Will you use the ILHIE network to initially connect white space entities to HIE services?
The plan for the Peoria NEXT program is to use directly the ILHIE network to connect the identified white space entities to HIE services. This will be primarily be accomplished by using innovative software tools provided by team participant ViMedicus, Inc. to provide easy to use, intuitive interfaces to these HIE services. These applications will make uptake more efficient and will lower the cost of utilizing HIE services by the white space entities by providing intuitive access in a way that can be easily customized in order to fit existing (or meet new) clinical workflows.

Verify that the HIE service/solution is Direct-compliant or will be Direct-compliant by the time you will begin connecting white space entities to that service and indicate the date that it will be Direct-compliant
A key aspect of the proposed solution is that the services implemented and provided by the Peoria NEXT partnership will be compliant with the protocols of the Direct Project. The user interface tools will be designed to make the secure sending of messages via Direct exchange very intuitive and easy to implement. Also, the partnership will coordinate the provision of digital certificates to white space entities and providers. The program will provide the Direct compliant communications via the ILHIE Direct network services.

How will you assist connected white space entities to utilize HIE services in the delivery of care?
The partnership will develop a three part offering in order to assist connected white space entities to utilize HIE services in the delivery of care.

1. Providing easy to use tools to connect with HIE services

   EMR systems and other clinical information tools that the white space entities rely on to deliver their services have not historically been very effective in utilizing new means of communication. In fact, we expect that a number of the white space providers we will connect with HIE services will not have a certified EMR as a core component of their clinical practice. So, as a result, it has been difficult or impossible for white space entities to avail themselves of new HIE services without significant disruption to existing workflows.

   The Peoria NEXT partnership will include an innovative Illinois HIT company, ViMedicus, Inc., in order to develop the tools, including intuitive user interfaces, which will greatly simplify the white space entities' connection to HIE services which will work in conjunction with their existing systems, or even on a standalone basis. This will allow the white space entities to utilize HIE services in their existing workflows without incurring the cost or disruption of fundamentally changing their IT infrastructure.

2. Measuring HIE value and calculating acceptable service costs

   The HIE market is evolving rapidly, and the sources of financing for these exchanges is also expected to evolve. Any transition in the source of funding for a HIE is likely to have an impact on the cost of the services paid by HIE subscribing entities. As a result this creates a sense of cost uncertainty for the white space entities when deciding whether to purchasing HIE services in. This uncertainty is an inhibitor for adoption.

   The partnership will help ILHIE determine a sustainable level of fees that reflects the value realized by the entities that will be subscribing to its HIE services. We will measure such value and ILHIE will be able to provide visibility to its clients of a sustainable cost structure. This will provide prospective clients (including other white space" entities) with a level of transparency that should greatly increase confidence when make their purchase decision. As a result this should greatly increase the adoption of HIE services.

3. Developing White Space Entity HIE Implementation Strategy

   Many white space entities have a knowledge shortfall of the HIE services that would be available to them and, more importantly, how utilizing these services will help them to improve both patient care and health outcomes. The partnership intends to create a number of HIE implementation strategy plans that will provide roadmaps for the white space entity providers to adopt the HIE services into their clinical workflows and utilize the new software tools in order to make this adoption of these HIE services simple and effective. Significantly, demonstrating the ability to interconnect among HIE networks, which the team will explore achieving during the execution of the program, could help create extra value by providing access to a broader range of patient healthcare information.

   A key aspect of the implementation strategy is to help the candidate white space entities satisfy Meaningful Use ("MU") requirements to support their participation in the Office of National Coordinator ("ONC") and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ("CMS") incentive programs. The functions of the applications and services which the partnership will

develop and deliver will focus on satisfying the MU requirements for communications, care plan and summary exchange, and provider clinical information electronic security.

Please provide a summary of your organization's experience (in terms of services and results) in health information technology and working with health care providers
The team that Peoria NEXT has organized has, among them, experience in designing HIE strategies, developing HIT tools, and implementing HIT network and HIE services. Importantly, Peoria NEXT also has experience in developing systems to measure outcomes in the healthcare environment, since it is located in a region of Illinois which has a diverse population, sophisticated healthcare delivery services, and a "closed" environment in which causes and outcomes can be measured.

Please identify any organizations with which you will partner to execute your proposal
Peoria NEXT has organized a strong set of partners to design, implement and execute the solutions desired by the Illinois OHIT in terms of providing the desired HIE services to underserved healthcare providers in the state. These partners, and their roles on the team, include:

- Peoria NEXT (www.heartlandpartnership.org/content/peoria-next)
    - Convener
    - Organization, management and implementation services
    - Recruitment of white space entities and providers in the Central Illinois region

- Illinois Medical District (www.imdc.org)
  The Illinois Medical District is the largest urban healthcare district in the United States, and consists of nearly 40 healthcare related entities, including 4 major hospitals, featuring the nation's largest college of medicine. The District encompasses over 20,000 employees, a significant number being physicians and other clinicians. It has a history of enabling innovation and helping to provide advanced healthcare services to the patients and providers who make use of the District.
    - Recruit white space participants from its provider base in the Chicago urban region
    - Develop provider clinical workflow implementation strategies and guidelines

- Strategies for Tomorrow (www.sftvision.com)
  Strategies for Tomorrow (SFT) has built a national reputation of bringing communities together to plan, strategize and implement health information exchanges (HIEs).
    - Provide strong healthcare IT and HIE domain expertise
    - Direct and design the makeup of the HIE services that will be delivered
    - Support the architecture design for the HIE connectivity protocols
    - Guide the implementation of the Direct compliant connectivity protocols
    - Measure and determine the value proposition aspects of the HIE services delivered

- ViMedicus, Inc. (www.vimedicus.com)
  ViMedicus is a start-up healthcare IT company in Chicago which develops intuitive user interfaces to enable clinicians to better access and utilize clinical data.
    - Develop the HIE connectivity applications and user interfaces through which the white space entities will access the HIE services
    - Develop the provider clinical workflow implementation strategies and guidelines
    - Manage the implementation of HIE connectivity services

Summary

The Peoria NEXT team is uniquely qualified to design, develop and implement the required pilot program services to connect at least 50 providers from a minimum of 5 white space entities from both urban and downstate regions in Illinois. These services will be based on a Direct-compliant, intuitive and easy to use connection to the ILHIE backbone. The focus on providers and easing the implementation of HIE services into their day-to-day clinical workflow is a key feature of our proposal.

Additionally, our unique ability to reach white space entities in both urban and rural settings, and potentially connect the networks in the geographic regions, will help provide the broadest amount of information to the Illinois OHIT with respect to rolling out HIE services more broadly across the state, and measuring the values achievable in a multiplicity of settings. This will be achievable because of the key abilities to measure inputs and outcomes provided by the team.

Peoria NEXT believes that its team, and its approach to developing and providing HIE services to the candidate white space entities, will increase the implementation of HIE services within Illinois, build demand for ILHIE services, help providers achieve Meaningful Use, and lead to improved healthcare outcomes among patients in Illinois.